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Samuel Alexander Pope

INAUGURAL ADDRESS,

DELIVERED

IN CARLISLE, SEPTEMBER 10, 1834,

UPON THE RE-OPENING OF

DICKINSON COLLEGE.

BY
John THE REV. J. P. DURBIN, A. M.
A. D. PRINCIPAL.

Published by order of the Board of Trustees.

CARLISLE:
PRINTED BY G. FLEMING.
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ADDRESS :

*Gentlemen of the Board,
Friends of Dickinson College,
and Citizens and Visitors generally :*

IN obedience to an ancient and respectable custom, I avail myself of the present appropriate occasion to make a few remarks upon the general question of education, and the particular condition and prospects of this Institution.

If it were possible to separate the prosperity of religion from the influences of education, there can be no doubt but that education would be the second great interest of mankind, as Christianity is the first. But as such a separation, from the very nature of the case, cannot be effected, the value of education is enhanced in proportion as it advances enlightened, experimental, and practical piety. Education, therefore, which has not due respect to our moral powers and religious obligations, should never be considered or attempted. Yet it need not be regarded as wholly or mainly applicable to these objects. The extent of its application in this case, is to be determined by the necessary connection which exists between it, and public and private morals and religion. The main design of a liberal education is, to develope, enlarge, strengthen, and discipline the intellect. But in conducting this interesting process, due respect must be had to the connection between the mind and the body, and the influence of the operations of the former upon the health and passions of the latter. The process should not be so severe or extended as to enfeeble the physical man ; and great care should be taken that no elements enter into

it which tend to corrupt and enflame the passions. Hence a Seminary of learning should endeavour to educate the intellect, the morals, and the physical powers of the youth committed to its care.

It requires no great effort of the mind to perceive, that a human being, thoroughly educated in these respects, approaches as near the perfection of his nature as his earthly condition will admit; and that, in proportion as a whole population is thus educated, it must not only be more wise and powerful, but more happy, safe, and comfortable in its social, civil, and political conditions. This great truth is attested by the history of ancient and modern nations. Those which have cultivated letters, and the arts and sciences most successfully, have been most remarkable for their wisdom, power and virtue; and the conveniences and comforts which render life pleasant and agreeable. Hence, enlightened statesmen have co-operated with the enterprize of enlightened citizens, in providing the means of education, as nearly as possible, for the whole youthful population. And if a comparison of the relative prosperity, happiness, resources and power of Asia and Europe may be considered in evidence on this great question, it will appear very clearly, that such appropriations from private or public beneficence are the most profitable investments for the mass of the people. The interest which each individual has in the general and particular results of education, though he himself may not be educated, may not appear so obviously at a glance. But it is demonstrable to the most ordinary capacity in a very few minutes. Does not every farmer, mechanic, merchant, and citizen find his interests in the construction of roads and canals which equalize the value of their merchandize, and their lands and labor, compared with more favorably situated parts? In the produc-

tion and application of steam to facilitate travelling and commerce? In the improvement of manufactures of every kind, thereby reducing the price of the articles? In the invention of new and the perfecting of old implements of husbandry and house-keeping? Thus augmenting greatly the amount of the conveniences and comforts of life, at the same time reducing the amount of manual labor and fatigue. This interesting truth is lost in the prevalence of the fruits of the arts and sciences. It would appear, if we reflect, that the palace of the prince, during the exile of learning in the dark ages, was destitute of the comforts and ordinary conveniences which are found in the cottage of every industrious poor man in those countries where the arts and sciences have operated on the whole population.

In these remarks, education, or rather the results of the arts and sciences, are considered in respect to our physical condition and wants. But when we consider the influence of education upon the intellect and morals of the pupils, or upon the intelligence and morals of the people, we shall find a still greater interest. It is impossible to say, how far the most illiterate and ignorant member of society is benefitted by the general state of education in the community in which he lives. His condition and opinions are positively and extensively modified and improved. He feels more or less the influence of public sentiment, and hence is led to reject many superstitious opinions and injurious errors, and to adopt more elevated views, without understanding their origin. This is particularly the case in the United States, where the products of genius, the arts and the sciences, are spread before the public, and introduced into almost every house, by the most varied, free, enterprising and prolific press in the world.

If this remote and indirect action upon the great mass of

mind, be so extensive and beneficial, what must be the amount of advantage to the pupils themselves? One direct and important benefit is, the conscious pleasure arising from the operations of their own minds while they successfully investigate the laws of the material universe, their own powers and responsibilities, involving the various relations of society; and the character of the Almighty. There is another more obvious advantage, which is generally considered the greatest: it is the ascendancy which the educated have over the uneducated; thus giving them facilities for acquiring influence, distinction and wealth. This single fact discloses the true foundations of a republican government, and the only principle on which the friends of liberty can hope for the permanency of free institutions: that is; the unqualified admission of the sentiment, that, "all men are born free and equal." The action on this great natural truth can be perfect and perpetual only in proportion as the condition of the whole population is elevated and equalized. If a few possess themselves of the advantages of education, while the great mass is sunk in utter ignorance, they will quickly acquire all the elements of power, and thus subvert the liberties of the people. In order to prevent this, the people must be educated in common schools and academies to such an extent as to enable them to judge correctly of the pretensions, demands, and conduct of those who aspire to instruct or to rule them. This is the only conservative principle in any free government on earth.— Let every American citizen, who is jealous of the civil and religious liberty he enjoys, consider well this important question, and not only see that his own sons and daughters are educated, but cheerfully and promptly co-operate with the State, and with patriotic and benevolent individuals in all feasible plans for the education of all the people in the land.

In the preceding paragraphs education has been considered as of public benefit and general application. But when an individual seeks and obtains a liberal education, he is supposed to have a professional life in view. The course of studies in Colleges is not arranged with respect to any particular profession, but simply with design to develope equally and perfectly, as nearly as may be, the intellectual, moral, and physical powers of the man, and to put him in possession of the elements of general knowledge. At this stage of his education he graduates as Bachelor of Arts, and is prepared to enter upon the peculiar studies of any particular profession; or to extend and perfect his education in detail, in pursuit of the sciences and arts, and literature in general: and thus, according to a reasonable usage, graduates in three years, to the degree of Master of Arts.

In order to bring forth these results, it is necessary to educate the intellect, the moral senses, and the physical man. To accomplish this, the Collegiate course is arranged, as it respects the branches taught, the extent of the instruction, and the time consumed. There is a general agreement among colleges in these particulars, and Dickinson will not depart from common usage, except, indeed, she may have required a little more than some others for admission; and extended her course somewhat. The Board have established seven professorships, all of which will be filled as soon as the number and progress of the students shall require it, and the finances of the Institution will permit. On this point it is believed there will be no difficulty. The Professorships are,—

1. Intellectual and moral philosophy, evidences of natural and revealed religion, and political economy.
2. "Exact Sciences," embracing all the branches of pure mathematics, including optics, mechanics, and astronomy,

and such other subjects in natural philosophy as depend directly upon these.

3. "Natural Sciences," comprehending natural philosophy, chemistry, mineralogy, meteorology, geology, botany, and animal and vegetable physiology.

4. "Ancient Languages," the Latin and Greek, Roman and Grecian antiquities.

5. "Belles Lettres," embracing rhetoric and elocution, to which are to be added philosophical, critical, and classical illustrations of the English Language and Literature. It is intended that this shall be a prominent and efficient department.

6. "Modern Languages," French, German, Spanish and Italian. The studies in this department will be optional with the student, or his parents. It is intended to meet the demands of the age, and enable the institution to offer every facility to a complete education.

7. "Law Professorship." This department is to be under the entire control of the Hon. John Reed, and it is expected to open the ensuing spring. There will be a class proper, intended for the practice of the law. Judge Reed will deliver a regular course of lectures on the general principles of law, and on international law; and on the constitutions of governments, particularly our own.

The students in college, at proper stages in their studies, will attend these important lectures.

This is an extended and excellent course, designed not only to afford a liberal and solid education to the alumni, but to acquire some splendor and reputation to the State, and the country. It is not deemed necessary to say anything respecting each particular Professorship, or of the value of the studies contained therein. They are all essential to an accomplished scholar; though it will be admitted

that some are more important than others; and it is stated that some are at the discretion of the student or his parents. The arrangement for Collegiate lectures upon the general principles of national and common law; upon the prominent features of different forms of government, and the peculiarities of our own, is considered a great improvement. These lectures are not intended to make professional or practical lawyers, but to give the graduates general information upon the most important principles of national and common law, and the science of government. No text books or recitations will be required. The student may be examined upon the lectures as he hears them; but such an examination will not be required for graduation as Bachelor of Arts. It might be desirable to have similar lectures upon Anatomy, Physiology, and some other branches of the Medical Profession. It is feared that the graduates of most of our colleges return home with but little knowledge in these great departments of science; not sufficient for the ordinary purposes of conversation in intelligent society; or to direct their conduct in common cases which may arise.

Before the internal and domestic plans and interests of the college are noticed, it may be well to advert to the influence which its success will have upon the prosperity of Common Schools. Almost every State has a well digested system of Common Schools; and funds provided for their support. There are children in abundance to be taught, and the States have ample means to pay for their instruction: but where are suitable Teachers in sufficient numbers? There is a great and distressing deficiency here. It is earnestly desired, and faithfully intended, that Dickinson College shall supply this lack to some reasonable extent. Special care should be had to the instruction of young men for

teachers in Common Schools, when it is ascertained that they incline to this occupation. Thus will our Institution co-operate with the State, in carrying fully into effect an excellent system of common and universal education.

The experience of the best conducted Colleges clearly indicates, that the government ought to be chiefly, if not wholly, paternal. It certainly ought to be so as nearly as the assumed relation between the Professors and students can be made to assimilate to the natural relation existing between parents and children. And this assimilation is much closer between excellent and faithful professors, and good moral and obedient students, than can be ascertained, except upon trial. The ties are intimate, tender, and strong, and last through life. But since a college is a Christian family constituted by voluntary association, while the government is paternal and gentle, it must also be steady, firm, and, when necessary, decisive; so that no one may remain in this family whose presence and conduct are injurious to the members. With these views the Board have very much abridged the Statutes of the College, particularly the chapters on "Crimes and Punishments." All the usual specifications here are left out, and only two or three paragraphs of a general nature are retained.

To preserve the morals, manners, and tempers of the students in a healthful state is very desirable: but how to do this, is a problem which has been of difficult solution. To shut them up in the college where they must board and lodge among themselves, has always been productive of evils. To allow them to reside wholly among the citizens has been productive of other evils. The medium, therefore, has been supposed the better course. Hence the Trustees have ordained that the students shall lodge in the

college, and board in private families.* This will exclude them from society sufficiently for the purposes of study and discipline; and yet bring them into intercourse with it so as to have a beneficial effect upon their morals and manners, and produce a common interest, to some extent, between the students and citizens. In this arrangement it is absolutely necessary that the students and family sit down to the table together, under the influence and in the observance of the established rules of propriety and private life. If a family consent not to this, it is a sufficient bar to the admission of students: if a student do not conduct himself in strict accordance with these views he should be excluded from the family.

There is no question, connected with the re-opening of Dickinson College, which excites such intense interest as this: *What religious requisitions will be made upon the students?* This shall be answered with all frankness. There will be no further requisition than is stated in the following recent ordinance of the Board:—

Every student shall attend public worship every Sabbath morning, at some church in the borough; and in the afternoon or evening also, unless there is a Bible recitation during the day, under the direction of the Principal.

Attendance upon public worship during the Sabbath day will, therefore, be required; but there is not any requisition as to the ministry or church. These are at the option of

* The Steward, who has charge of the College Edifice and grounds, resides in the building with his family. His family is therefore considered a *private family* with whom the Students may board. The Faculty regulate the *price* of board here, though there is no compulsion on the students. There is no occasion to give more for board than the price fixed with the Steward, as it is fixed in view of his keeping a respectable table as in other private families in the town.

the student or his parents. The Faculty will see that each student gives regular and respectful attendance, at some church in the borough as required. Thus the students will mingle with the citizens in their attendance upon the worship and service of God.

But while this reasonable liberty is cheerfully conceded to each student, and admitted to be right and proper; it is not to be supposed that Dickinson College will be indifferent to the religious interests of her sons. They will be received as Christian youth, members of Christian families, in a Christian country; and it will be the duty of this ancient and venerable Institution to see that they lose not this character by a residence within her walls. This duty will be discharged faithfully, yet discreetly.

It may be proper to make a single remark upon the financial plans and prospects of the college. The project which the Trustees and friends have marked out, and which they earnestly anticipate and strongly hope will be fully realized, is this: To call upon the friends and alumni of the Institution particularly; and the patriotic, enlightened and benevolent generally, for voluntary subscriptions for the purpose of permanently endowing the Professorships. There is no doubt but this call will be fully answered as between Fifty Five and Sixty Thousand Dollars have been subscribed already. The funds raised by these subscriptions are to be invested in the most safe and profitable manner, and only the interest used for the current expenses of the school. This plan will ensure it a permanent support, and place it above contingency. The subscriptions are increasing.

It is not to be expected, however, that private benevolence can supply the current expenses of the college, and the additional buildings and apparatus, which must be necessa-

ry in a very short time, if reasonable success be attained. For these, chiefly, it is intended to ask the Legislature, at a proper time, for an appropriation to be expended in increasing the realty of the college, which being constantly insured will always remain and be the property of the state.

Among the first additions contemplated from this source is, the foundation of the Manual Labor System, arranged both for profit and health. This system will not only tend to the preservation of health, and to the pecuniary aid of those who may use it for this purpose; but it will reduce the general expenses of the college, and improve the morals and discipline. The accomplishment of this great object has already attracted the particular attention of the Board; and as soon as means can be obtained, the plan will take effect.

It is necessary to have a well organized Grammar School, in which students may be properly prepared for the classes. The Board have not only given special attention to this matter, but have been very fortunate and successful in their plans, and in the selection of Teachers. The Grammar school is in excellent order, and very full.

The time will quickly arrive, when a separate building, with a suitable Boarding House, will be necessary for this school. It cannot long continue in the College Edifice. The pupils in it which come from a distance, are generally small, and it is not desirable that they should be dispersed through town. They are not competent to take care of, and provide for themselves. Hence, the Grammar School should be a Boarding School for these small pupils from a distance, in which every thing should be provided for them as in a well regulated family. From this Boarding School they will remove to apartments in college, upon entering the classes.

It will be perceived from what has been said, that the original character and objects of the college are not changed upon its resuscitation. It is intended to be strictly and entirely literary and scientific. Its doors will be impartially open to the whole population without distinction of sect or party. The earnest desire of its friends is, to make it a public blessing, an ornament to the State, and the pride and glory of the borough.

The success of a college depends, to some extent, upon many circumstances; mainly upon the following:—

The wisdom and faithfulness of the Board of Trustees. They ought not only to be the guardians of the Institution, but its patient, warm, and active friends. They should be parental and judicious in their enactments in reference to the students; liberal and candid in their arrangements and intercourse with the Faculty.

The ability and aptitude of the Professors. Experience has fully demonstrated that a Professor may be an accomplished scholar, and yet an unsuccessful Teacher; owing to his want of tact and facility in communicating instruction. His method of teaching is a matter of great importance. It should be by careful recitation on the part of the student, accompanied with appropriate and full illustrations in familiar and easy conversations by himself. The student should not be restrained from proper and respectful inquiries, but rather encouraged; with comparisons of thoughts and views, both with the Professor and members of the class. Whenever the college shall attain such a condition as will allow of it, each Professor should have an Assistant or Tutor, who should hear many of the recitations, and thus afford him time to prepare Lectures for his classes, in which the subjects will correspond with the progress of the student in his text books. These Lectures will afford va-

ried and extended views of the subjects contained in the recitations; and will inform the student of the best method of prosecuting his inquiries; and the authors from which to derive accurate information. This I conceive to be the most perfect system of instruction in colleges.

The good morals and orderly behavior of the students contribute much to the success of an Institution. Any school, the students of which are remarkable for morality and virtue, will be more successful than others less remarkable in these respects, but more eminent for learning and science. The reason is simply this: Whatever parents may allow in themselves, they are not disposed to have their sons educated in vice. And there is a growing disposition in community to adopt the sentiment; That virtue, purity, and goodness, with a large share of ignorance, are better than universal learning accompanied with depraved principles and bad morals. It is hoped and believed that every student entering Dickinson College will have due respect to his personal reputation, and the glory of his Alma Mater.

The sentiments and conduct of the citizens have some influence upon the success of a College. They may contribute to its morals and discipline, by favoring its government, and discountenancing and removing from the town and neighborhood, as much as may be, all occasions of vice and temptation. In this way the borough will acquire a reputation for morality, virtue, and good order which will contribute largely to the success of Dickinson College. How much the Board rely upon the citizens in these respects, may be seen in their arrangements for boarding the students, and their attendance upon public worship.

In all this matter the citizens will find their benefit. The prosperity and reputation of the college should be a matter

of pride, as it is the interest of every one. The business and employments of the town will feel the impulse and presence of a successful college, through all the stores, shops, hotels and cottages. But the beauty and convenience of the college grounds and buildings; the apparatus, cabinet, museum, library, and reputation of the school, ought to be the pride and boast of every citizen, and such as shall be mentioned by visitors after they have left the borough, and noticed and admired by the traveller in the stage. It is not doubted but the citizens of Carlisle will give all reasonable assistance to produce these desirable results.

It may be well to remark here, that the legitimate action of the civil authorities in suppressing vice, and thus removing the causes of corruption and temptation from the students, will facilitate success.

But the hearty and constant co-operation of parents for the suppression of extravagance in the expenditure of money, and the promotion of strict economy, is one of the most important means of rendering an Institution successful. If parents will supply their sons with money to expend profusely, or for purposes not necessary to their residence at college, they not only corrupt their own offspring, and defeat their education; but they materially affect the wishes and practices of other students, and thus tarnish and destroy the reputation of the school. It will be strictly required of parents and guardians to confine their supplies of money to the reasonable necessities of an ordinary residence at college. The Board have wisely enacted, that whenever a student shall become extravagant in his expenditures, he shall, after proper admonition and forbearance, be dismissed. And it may be well to add, that as the judgment and execution of this matter are committed to the Faculty; they will in no case fail to act discreetly, yet promptly and firmly.

The periodical press has some influence upon the success of a Seminary of Learning. There can be no doubt but that it sometimes speaks too favorably of individual members, or of the general reputation of an Institution. And there is as little doubt but that it sometimes censures without cause, or accurate knowledge of facts. The public press should regard a college somewhat in the light of a private family, whose internal interests and concerns are mainly peculiar to itself; respecting which no censure should be made, except with great care, and upon the most indubitable information, which should be sought, and not taken from report, or ex parte statements. Recent occurrences, respecting an ancient and celebrated Institution in the East, will attest what is here stated. An unwarrantable censure of a college, in a public paper, however well intended, may inflict a wound which no subsequent explanation or apologies can cure. The press in the vicinity of a Seminary ought to regard it as a domestic institution; a common fountain from which may issue excellent essays and pleasing contributions to enrich its columns. And as Dickinson College is not, and shall not be, connected in any way, with any political or local question or party, it is particularly desired that the general acts of the Institution, and the particular acts of its administration may be understood accordingly.

The condition of our country, the genius of our civil and religious institutions, and the intrinsic value of Elocution, demand that the students shall be carefully and correctly taught the principle and practice of good speaking. Special care shall be had, and suitable arrangements made, to cultivate among the students a natural, easy, forcible, and just elocution. Not an elocution of a uniform and marked character, so as to enable one to say, when the graduate is

heard to speak, *he is an alumnus of Dickinson College.* But an elocution which shall be the product of deep feeling, inspired by a just and powerful comprehension of the subject. The eloquence of nature directed and chastened by proper instruction and suitable practice.

To attain this great and available result of a liberal education, it may be necessary to allow declamation upon most of the interesting topics which are, at the time, engrossing the attention of the public. If such liberty be allowed, it will be common to all sides and questions; restrained within the bounds of moral propriety of sentiment and language, and personal respect. It will be considered simply as a piece of declamation recited on the stage, and not as indicating the sentiments of either the speaker, or any member of the Faculty, college, or corporation. This is a liberty which is reasonable, and seems to be necessary to the cultivation of a free, natural, and forcible elocution. Formal essays, or even powerful speeches on subjects forgotten a century ago, cannot interest the speaker or the audience. But this liberty, if used, will be restrained to recitation on the stage; no original productions of this kind will be allowed. Because these would be considered as indicating personal opinion. Besides, this liberty is not necessary in such compositions; as their originality will give them freshness and vigor.

I desire to add particularly the result of my own observation and experience, on another point: it is this: The presence of ladies and gentlemen, will contribute much to the interest and success of the exercises in public speaking. It excites a healthy emulation and action; wakes up the feelings and calls forth the powers of nature, and affords the student an opportunity of a acquiring reputation.

I have thus presented briefly the general question of ed-

ucation, and the plans and prospects of Dickinson College. I indulge the hope that is common to man; that they may be favorably received, and carefully cherished by the public, until this ancient seat of learning may not only attain a reputation equal to itself in any former period, but surpass it in proportion as society and the country have advanced: that it may be an ornament to the State; the delight of this borough, the glory of its friends, and a fountain of sound and useful learning, of extensive science, and of virtue, morality and religion.



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